TOP 15 Healthy Living Tips!

1. Stop smoking. It has been extensively proven that smoking is detrimental to health, severely increasing the risk of lung cancer, kidney cancer, esophageal cancer (of our gullet), heart attack, and more. Smoking "light" cigarettes does not decrease health risks. Bottom line – if you're a smoker, quit for better health of not just yourself, but also your family and friends. If you don't smoke, stay that way and don't start.   Second hand smoke causes many of the same long-term diseases as direct smoking does.

2. Get enough sleep: When you don't rest well, you compensate by eating more. Usually it's junk food. Get enough rest and you don't need to snack to stay awake. Also, lack of sleep causes premature aging, and you wouldn't want that.

3. Exercise: Not just a few times a week, but every day. Movement is life. Research has shown that exercising daily brings tremendous benefits to our health, including increase of life span, lowering of risk of diseases, higher bone density and weight loss. Increase activity in your life. Choose walking over transport for close distances. Climb the stairs instead of taking the lift. Join some aerobics classes. Take up a sport of your liking

Pick exercises you enjoy. When you enjoy the sports, you'll naturally want to do them. Exercise isn't about suffering and pushing yourself; it's about being healthy and having fun at the same time. Adding variation in your exercises will keep them interesting.

Work out different parts of your body. Don't just do cardio exercises (such as jogging). Give your full body a proper work out. The easiest way is to engage in sports, since they work out different muscle groups. Popular sports include basketball, football, swimming, tennis, squash, badminton, frisbee, and more.

4. Eat more fruits: Fruits are a plethora of vitamins and minerals. Do you know that oranges offer more health benefits than Vitamin C pill_s_? Taking in synthetic supplements are not the same as consuming the foods direct from nature. Fill your palate with these 10 most nutritious fruits: Watermelon, Apricots, Avocado, Apple, Cantaloupe, Grapefruit, Kiwi, Guava, Papaya, Strawberries.

5. Eat more vegetables: Like fruits, vegetables are important for the well being of our health. Experts suggest that we should have 5-9 servings of fruits/vegetables,

and unfortunately most people don't even have at least 5 servings! Some of my favorite vegetables include: Kidney beans, black beans, asparagus, long beans, french beans, sprouts, button mushrooms and carrots. What are your favorite vegetables and how can you include more of them in your diet today?

Pick bright colored foods. Fruits and vegetables with bright colors are usually high in anti-oxidants. Anti-oxidants are good for health because they remove free radicals in our body that damage our cells. So get your fill of fruits/vegetables of different colors: White (Bananas, Mushroom), Yellow (Pineapples, Mango), Orange (Orange, Papaya), Red (Apple, Strawberries, Tomatoes, Watermelon), Green (Guava, Avocados, Cucumber, Lettuce, Celery), Purple/Blue (Blackberries, Eggplant, Prunes).

6. Cut down on processed food:
Processed foods are not good because (1) most nutritional value is lost (2) the preservatives added are bad for our health. Many processed foods contain a high amount of salt content, which leads to higher blood pressure and heart disease. Processed foods are anything that are not in their raw form. In general, most of the food in supermarket are processed – the more the ingredients on the label (especially the ones ending with 'ite' or 'ate'), the more processed they are. Watch out for those with salt/sugar as the first 5 ingredients and go for natural foods as much as possible.

7. Avoid trigger foods:
Trigger foods are the foods that make you go berserk and binge like crazy after you eat them. Everyone's trigger foods are different (mine are donuts, pastries, pasta and chips), but generally trigger foods are candy bars, chocolate, confectionery, chips, cookies, or anything with high level of refined sugar, salt, fat or flour. These foods cause a blood sugar imbalance, hence triggering one to eat more. What are your trigger foods? Identify them and remove them from your diet.

8. Address emotional eating issues:
Emotional eating is eating to fill an emotion, rather than real hunger. Do you eat when you feel stressed out, down or frustrated? Do you reach out for food when you hit a block at work? Chances are, you're emotional eating. However, emotional eating will never make you feel happy, because you're trying to fill a void that has nothing to do with food. Food doesn't give you love or happiness; it's just food. Why do you reach out for food when you're down? How can you address it? Get to the root of the issue and address it

9. Eat small meals:
Choose several small meals over a few big meals a day. This balances out your energy distribution throughout the day. In general, eat when you feel hungry, and stop when you're full. You don't need to wait until official meal times before you start eating. Listen to your body and what it tells you. **Stop eating when you feel full**.

10. Say No to oily foods:
Reduce your intake of fast food, fries, doughnuts, chips, wedges, and foods that have been deep fried. Not only are they very fattening (1 tablespoon of oil is 120 calories), deep fried food contains acrylamide, a potential

cancer-causing chemical. There are better alternatives, such as grilled, steamed, stir-fried or even raw food

11. Cut out sugary foods: These are your candy bars, your pastries, chocolate, cookies, cakes and jelly donuts. Not only do they not fill you, they trigger you to eat more due to the sugar rush they cause.   Go for healthy snacks instead, you'll be more satisfied and happy.

12. Cut out soda and caffeine: Drinks with caffeine are diuretics – meaning they speed up the rate of urine production. Hence, these drinks do not contribute to your 8 glasses of water/day requirement – they actually take away from it! Furthermore, soda is unhealthy, causes weight gain, is an artificial stimulant, among other reasons. Ditch your soda and go for plain

13. Drink more water: Most of us actually don't drink enough water every day. Water is essential for our body to function – Do you know over 60% of our body is made up of water? Water is needed to carry out our body functions, remove <u>waste</u> and carry nutrients and oxygen around our body. Since we lose water every day through urine, bowel movements, perspiration and breathing, we need to replenish our water intake.

Furthermore, drinking more water alone actually aids in losing weight. A Health.com study carried out among overweight/obese people showed that water drinkers lose 4.5 more pounds than a control group. The researchers believe that it's because drinking more water helps fill your stomach, making you less hungry and less likely to overeat. When you regularly drink water, your body knows that it's going to get its supply of fluids, so it doesn't try to retain more water.

14. Exercise good dental hygiene: Not only does good hygiene make you a lot more desirable, it is linked with better health. Brush your teeth twice a day, rinse your mouth after each meal and floss your teeth at night.

15. Purge negative people from your life. Positive mental healthy is an important part of a healthy life. You don't need toxic people in your life. If you feel that a friend is overly critical or negative, then let him/her go.

Purge <u>negativity</u> from yourself. You don't need negativity from yourself either. Listen in on the thoughts that come up in your mind and get rid of the negative thoughts you hear. A lot of eating happens because one feels unhappy, so by staying in a positive, up state by yourself, you cut out that unhealthy dependence on food to be happy.